

**University of British Columbia - SOCI 260A-001 - Technology, Work
and Society**
Fall 2014 - Course Outline
<https://sites.google.com/site/soci260/>

Instructor

Dr. Evan Keith Preston [kpreston@mail.ubc.ca]

Classes

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 11:00-12:00. Room - MATH 104

Office Time

By appointment.

Overview and Learning Outcomes

Information and communication technologies are the latest technologies to have had an impact not only on everyday non-work life but also on the organization and experience of work. This course introduces past and contemporary debates about the relationships among work, technology and society and introduces and assesses a number of concepts that allow us to think sociologically about these aspects of the world around us. An acquaintance with concepts that encourage us to think critically about the social world will potentially also encourage us to change it for the better.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course students will be able to: identify the major sociological perspectives on the relationships among work, technology and society; explain the influence of different national contexts on the use of new technologies in manufacturing; explain the influence of different national contexts on the use of new technologies in office work; explain the influence of different national contexts on the use of new technologies in managerial work; outline the implications of new forms of work organization; describe the relationship between technological change and globalization; explain how technological innovation is influenced by national contexts; assess arguments about the future of work, technology and society.

Organization

The course will be based on a close reading of the required text and organized as a mix of individual directed study, lectures, and in-class individual and group activities. Through individual directed study students will read required and recommended course material. Lectures will provide disciplinary and social context for this reading material and introduce concepts and examples relevant to this material but not included in the required reading. Ongoing in-class individual and group activities such as

quizzes, discussions, informal presentations, video viewing, problem solving... will reinforce and assess understanding of both reading and lecture material.

Required and Recommended Reading

The required reading for the course is from: Boreham, Paul, Rachel Parker, Paul Thompson and Richard Hall. 2008. *New Technology @ Work*. New York: Routledge. Throughout the course the instructor will recommend additional reading material.

Grading

The grade for the course will be determined by performance on: **2 in-class tests; a library research essay; and a final exam.**

Test 1 is worth 20% of the course grade. Test 2 is worth 20% of the course grade. The essay is worth 30% of the course grade. The exam is worth 30% of the course grade.

Test 1 - This will be held in the last class of week 4. It will consist of objective [multiple-choice and true/false] questions based on reading and class [lecture, video, class discussion...] material from weeks 1-4. **Test 2** - This will be held in the last class of week 8. It will consist of objective [multiple-choice and true/false] questions based on reading and class [lecture, video, class discussion...] material from weeks 5-8. **Exam** - This will be held in the formal exam period. It will consist of 5 short-answer questions - 3 of which must be answered using no more than 250 words per answer - based on reading and class [lecture, video, class discussion...] material from weeks 9-13. **Essay** - Essay topics will be made available after week 4 and a 750 word essay referencing the course text and 3 contemporary [>2010] academic journal articles can be submitted at any time before the end of week 12.

Marking Criteria for Responses to Short-answer Questions

Appearance - name and student number; legibility; organization; consistent formatting; double-spacing; numbered pages; word count; clean paper. *Breadth* - inclusion of context [academic] and key points. *Clarity* - correct disciplinary terminology used; meaning of sentences clear; correct grammar, spelling and punctuation; logical arrangement of points.

Marking Criteria for Responses to Essay Questions

Appearance - name and student number; legibility; organization; consistent formatting; double-spacing; numbered pages; word count; clean paper. *Breadth* - inclusion of context [academic and social], key, example

and critical points. *Clarity* - correct disciplinary terminology used; meaning of sentences clear; correct grammar, spelling and punctuation; logical arrangement of points. *Documentation* - correct Social Science Style [as used in the *Canadian Review of Sociology*] use and acknowledgement of paraphrases, quotes, citations and references.

Grades

An 'A' grade [80%-84% = A-, 85%-89% = A, 90%-100% = A+] will be awarded for exceptional performance.

A 'B' grade [68%-71% = B-, 72%-75% = B, 76%-79% = B+] will be awarded for competent performance.

A 'C' grade [55%-59% = C-, 60%-63% = C, 64%-67% = C+] will be awarded for adequate performance.

A 'D' grade [50%-54%] will be awarded for just-adequate performance.

An 'F' grade [0%-49%] will be awarded for an inadequate performance.

Academic Integrity - please be familiar with University policies on this.

Topics

Weeks 1 & 2 - Technology and Work. Introduction to Sociology.

Introduction to popular and sociological perspectives on technology and work. New technology and work. [Reading: course text chapter 1 and class notes]

Weeks 3 & 4 - Technology and Change at Work. Technological determinism. Political materialism. Social constructionism. [Reading: course text chapter 2 and class notes]

Weeks 5 & 6 - Manufacturing and Technology. Technologies in manufacturing. Advanced manufacturing technologies. Cross-national differences. [Reading: course text chapter 3 and class notes]

Week 7 - Office Work and Technology. A history of office work. The call centre phenomenon. [Reading: course text chapter 4 and class notes]

Week 8 - Managerial Work and Technology. Managerial work. Managing managers. Knowledge management. ICT workers. [Reading: course text chapter 5 and class notes]

Week 9 - New Work and Technology. Distributed work forms. Telework. Reorganization of work. The virtual workplace. [Reading: course text chapter 6 and class notes]

Week 10 - The Global Context. Dimensions of globalization. Technological change. [Reading: course text chapter 7 and class notes]

Week 11 - National Technological Systems. Innovation. Varieties of capitalism and innovation. [Reading: course text chapter 8 and class notes]

Week 12 - The Future of Work. Technology and employment. Restructuring. ICT and services. Quality of work. [Reading: course text chapter 9 and class notes]

Week 13 - Conclusion.
